

# The Civil Rights Movement

## The civil rights struggle in modern times

**1954** -- U.S. Supreme Court declares school segregation unconstitutional in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka ruling.

**1955** -- Rosa Parks refuses to move to the back of a Montgomery, Alabama, bus as required by city ordinance; boycott follows and bus segregation ordinance is declared unconstitutional.

**1957** -- Arkansas Gov. Orval Rubus uses National Guard to block nine black students from attending a Little Rock High School; following a court order, President Eisenhower sends in federal troops to ensure compliance.

**1960** -- Four black college students begin sit-ins at lunch counter of a Greensboro, North Carolina, restaurant where black patrons are not served.

**1962** -- President Kennedy sends federal troops to the University of Mississippi to quell riots so that James Meredith, the school's first black student, can attend.

**1963** -- Civil rights leader Medgar Evers is killed by a sniper's bullet.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivers "I Have a Dream" speech to hundreds of thousands at the March on Washington.

Church bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, leaves four young black girls dead.

**1964** -- Three civil rights workers disappear in Mississippi after being stopped for speeding; found buried six weeks later.

**1965** -- March from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to demand protection for voting rights; two civil rights workers slain earlier in the year in Selma.

New voting rights act signed.

**1966** -- Edward Brooke, R-Massachusetts, elected first black U.S. senator in 85 years.

**1967** -- Thurgood Marshall first black to be named to the Supreme Court.

Carl Stokes (Cleveland) and Richard G. Hatcher (Gary, Indiana) elected first black mayors of major U.S. cities.

**1968** -- Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee; James Earl Ray later convicted and sentenced to 99 years in prison.

**1973** -- Maynard Jackson (Atlanta), first black elected mayor of a major Southern U.S. city.

**1983** -- Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday established.

**1989** -- Army Gen. Colin Powell becomes first black to serve as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

**1989** -- L. Douglas Wilder (Virginia) becomes first black elected governor.

**1991** -- Civil rights museum opens at King assassination site in Memphis.